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STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

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NSC FOR NEA STAFF

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HQ USAF FOR X0XX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
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CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

[1](#)1. Mideast

[1](#)2. Iran

Key stories in the media:

Over the weekend the media cited Israeli officialsQ overall satisfaction over the deal involving the publishing of a 2Q42 recording of captive soldier, Gilad Shalit, in exchange for the

release of 20 jailed Palestinian women. Some commentators raised doubts about Shalit's condition. A Jerusalem Post survey found that the likelihood of ministers in Netanyahu's cabinet voting in favor of a deal involving Shalit's release is higher than during Ehud Olmert's more left-leaning cabinet. Yediot reported that 33 Left and Right-leaning heads of pre-military educational institutions wrote DM Ehud Barak that Shalit's release should not come at any price. Media initially quoted senior Hamas official Mahmoud al-Zahar as saying that Shalit will be set free within weeks or two months at most, suggesting that the Islamic group might show greater flexibility in upcoming negotiations. However, Zahar was quoted as saying yesterday in interviews with various Israeli media that a swap deal is still a long way off.

All media reported on the resumption of violence on the Temple Mount. On Friday Raed Salah, the leader of the Islamic Movement's northern branch, told followers at the annual al-Aqsa convention in the Israel Arab city of Umm al-Fahm that should Muslims have to choose between renouncing the al-Aqsa Mosque and becoming martyrs they will choose the latter. Thousands of Muslims heeded Salah's call and made their way to Jerusalem's Old City yesterday. Israel Radio cited inciting broadcasts on Al Jazeera-TV and Hamas-controlled TV outlets. Israel Radio reported that yesterday the Jordanian Foreign Ministry summoned Israeli Ambassador in Amman, Yaakov Rosen, demanding that Israel stop the disturbances in the Old City of Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem Post wrote that the violence that has erupted in Jerusalem's Old City in the past few days can be seen in the context of the PA leadership's attempts to divert attention from what a Palestinian minister described as "one of the worst scandals since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority." PA representatives have been urging Palestinians to save the Aqsa Mosque from being "destroyed" or "captured" by Jewish "fanatics." The Jerusalem Post reported that a PA minister scoffed at Abbas's decision to establish a commission of inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the PA's move at the UN. The Jerusalem Post reported that a PA official accused Israel and the U.S. of "seriously embarrassing" the PA leadership by making public "secret understandings" regarding the deferral of the vote. He was quoted as saying that the understandings were supposed to remain secret. Another official claimed that the decision was taken by Fayyad, who did not consult with Abbas. However, sources close to Fayyad denied the claim and accused Abbas' advisers of exploiting the scandal to defame the PA prime minister and get rid of him. Yediot also cited mutual accusations among the PA leadership.

The Jerusalem Post, Yediot, and Israel Hayom reported that yesterday IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi made a secret visit to France for meetings with Adm. Michael Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Gen. Georges Georgelin, the chief of the French Defense Staff. The meeting focused on assessments regarding Iran, Syria, Hizbullah, and the joint Israeli-U.S. Juniper Cobra defense exercise that is scheduled later this month. The exercise will include the Israeli Arrow missile defense system as well as three American systems -- the THAAD, Aegis, and PAC3 -- that will all be deployed in Israel for the duration of the exercise.

Analyzing Assistant Secretary of State Michael Posner's address to the U.N.'s Human Rights Council, The Jerusalem Post wrote that the U.S. came out strongly in favor of the Israeli position on the matter, but left a door open for an external probe of Operation Cast Lead.

HaQaretz reported that a video tape made during a guided tour of the archaeological excavations at Silwan (the City of David) near Jerusalem's Old City walls reveals how Elad, the association that runs the dig, works together with the Israel Antiquities Authority, the Israel Nature and Parks Authority, and the Jerusalem municipality to dig under the homes of Arab residents -- potentially endangering them.

HaQaretz reported that Vice PM Moshe Ya'alon recently canceled a planned trip to Britain for fear of being arrested there for his role in the assassination of senior Hamas terrorist Salah Shehadeh in July 2002. The attack also killed 14 civilians.

The Jerusalem Post, Yediot, Maariv, and Israel Hayom reported that

former U.S. President Bill Clinton will visit Israel in mid-November to participate in the Saban Center's Forum for Middle East Policy. The conference, slated to take place in Jerusalem, will focus on strategic issues and cooperation between the new administrations in the U.S. and Israel. Some media reported that California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and Senator Joe Lieberman (IND-CT) will also attend the event.

The media reported that for the first time since Operation Cast Lead, IAF planes raided Gaza City on Saturday in response to Qassam rocket fire.

Over the weekend media quoted London's The Times as saying that PM Benjamin Netanyahu passed on to the Kremlin the list of Russian scientists who assist Iran. Yesterday The Jerusalem Post reported that on Friday Israel's Ambassador to the U.S. Michael Oren welcomed the arrangements worked out between the U.S. and other world powers with Iran the day before, in some of the first comments by an Israeli official on the talks.

The Jerusalem Post reported that yesterday South African jurist Richard Goldstone accepted an invitation from Sderot Mayor David Buskila to visit his city on his next trip to Israel.

The Jerusalem Post reported that hundreds of Likud activists and members from across the country will attend a Likud rally against the de facto West Bank settlement freeze in the northern West Bank settlement of Revava.

HaQaretz reported that the interministerial committee dealing with earthquake preparedness decided last month that early-warning systems will be activated in the near future to warn Israelis in the event of a tsunami in the Mediterranean Sea.

Leading media reported on the visit to Israel of American actor Elliott Gould, who is a member of the jury at the Haifa International Film Festival. Maariv reported on Brad Pitt's and Angelina Jolie's goodwill tour of Syria and Jordan on behalf of the U.N.

Maariv reported that Eva Miedzyborz (sp.) will replace Ron Kleinfeld as its Director-General.

1. Mideast:

Block Quotes:

I. "If This Is How Obama Handles the Olympics"

Columnist Shmuel Rosner, who was HaQaretz's correspondent in Washington, wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (10/5): QA weakened Obama is also more dangerous to Israel -- because a weakened Obama is a weakened United States. And a weakened United States means less chances of applying effective pressure on Iran, an increased chance that additional countries will decide to ignore Washington's political messages, and an increased concern that the global cop will lose his ability to prevent chaotic developments. One should hope that he will learn from his failures and his accrued experience. But one must take into account the fact that Israel, too, will pay the tuition fee. And the payment might be heftier than a settlement freeze or the evacuation of an outpost.... Thus, it is not sure whether one should be happy with the hurdles on Obama's road.

II. "Complete the Exchange"

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (10/4): QPrime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his representative in the negotiations [over the release of Gilad Shalit], Haggai Hadas, have changed the program for the talks that was set forth by their predecessors, former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and his representative, Ofer Dekel. The German mediator who joined the efforts has gained the trust of both parties and created a new mechanism for dialogue, whose first result has been the exchange of the tape for the female prisoners. Netanyahu has succeeded in

keeping the details of the talks secret.... Now Netanyahu needs to complete the deal, bring back Shalit, and put an end to this painful affair.... Yesterday Noam Shalit accused the QState of Israel and its decision makersQ of omissions that have needlessly prolonged his son's captivity. His pain is understandable, and his claims merit thorough examination, but now the Government needs to focus on achieving a reasonable compromise with Hamas, which would allow Shalit to return home to his family and country.

III. "The Public Has Decided"

Liberal columnist and television anchor Ofer Shelach wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (10/4): QFrom now on, the release of [the video recording including Shalit], which has great significance in the negotiating process, will be like something that is self-understood, a procedure that cannot be overridden.... Netanyahu has apparently made a final decision to go for a deal, and thatQs definitely legitimate.

¶2. Iran:

Block Quotes:

¶I. "Iran Sidetracks the World"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (10/5): QNo matter how the U.S. intelligence reassessment goes, or how Iran's export gambit plays out, or what happens when the inspectors visit Qom, at the end of the day -- and in keeping with the mullahs' strategy -- Iran will have bought time.... At this point, there are only three possibilities: (a) Iran will build a bomb; (b) draconian sanctions, spearheaded by Washington, will persuade Teheran to abort its program; (c) military intervention will significantly set the mullahs back. Assuming Obama realizes that the second option is by far the most preferable, he must not allow Tehran to sidetrack the discussion. All the world needs to know is when Iran will stop enriching uranium, and when it will end its weapons program.

II. "Peace in Exchange for the Bomb"

Senior op-ed writer Akiva Eldar commented in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (10/5): QIt is certainly possible that the ayatollah regime seeks to mislead the Americans in order to buy more time to complete its nuclear program. But what will we do if the Iranians surprise Obama with an offer to rid the Middle East of nuclear weapons and to help establish peace throughout the entire region? It is so convenient for us to remain tied to the policy of ambiguity on both issues. Netanyahu needs to prepare himself for the possibility that Iran will redeem its concessions vis-a-vis its nuclear program with Israeli concessions over the territories.

CUNNINGHAM